News release

Record-Breaking 2003

8 January 2004

Last year was the sunniest on record in England and Scotland, figures released by the Met Office reveal today.

In England, 1776.7 hours of sunshine were recorded, beating the previous sunniest in 1995 when 1729.7 hours were recorded. Meanwhile in Scotland, 1386.6 hours were recorded, again beating 1995 which had 1381.3 hours. Scotland also had its warmest year with an average temperature of 8.26 °C (previous highest 8.07 °C in 1997).

But, although 2003 may have been sunny and warm, 2004 is being seen in with torrential rain and high winds. Forecasters are warning flooding could be a problem across many parts of southern Britain today after heavy rain and strong winds overnight. Further gales are expected over the next few days.

Notes:

- Official Met Office records date back to 1961
- England and Wales had the 2nd driest year since 1766
- Highest daytime temperature in the UK was 38.5 C at Faversham in Kent on August 10, 2003

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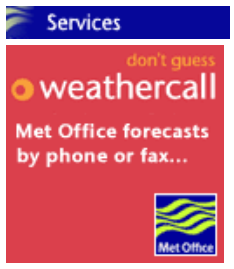

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